

	<p>1902 02 28</p> <p>The Cambridge Review refers to the conduct of three undergraduates whose behaviour disgusted all respectable people at the New Theatre. But the acts to which reference is made – loud talking during the performance, inopportune laughter and the evident watchfulness for double entendre – are condemned by the great body of undergraduate theatre-goers. To drag an offender out during the middle of the play would cause disturbance and annoyance to the audience. Mr Redfern has instead reported their names to their tutors who have seen that punishment has been administered. The few silly young men who still act in this way will find it prudent to amend their manners. 02 02 28</p>
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Cambridge THEATRE Chronicle

c.76: theatre by Mike Petty

Professional actors could be imprisoned in Cambridge - F.A. Reeve article on early entertainment – 61 06 09a & b

New Theatre, formerly St Andrew's Hall and Theatre Royal, St Andrew's Street – history by F.A. Reeve 61 06 16c & d

Sturton Town Hall as theatre – memories – 37 09 11c

Barnwell Mission anniversary – at last performance in theatre some of scenery got on fire and scribbled all over were the words: "A parcel of fanatics have bought this place, and acting will not cease; review development of religion in region 13 11 28 p4 CIP

Festival theatre invited audience to see performance again free, encouraged smoking and had programmes printed so could read by holding up to light – feature – 64 08 26

1880

1889

Rodney Dramatic Club begin annual performances

1894

Cambridge University & Corporation Act abolishes Vice Chancellor's veto on theatrical licences [4.13]

1895

W.B. Redfern purchases St Andrews Hall, St Andrews Street & rebuilds as New Theatre

1896 01 20

New Theatre opening; foundation stone was laid by Beerbohm Tree [3.23]

1897 07 13

The second annual meeting of the shareholders of the New Theatre, Cambridge, Ltd was held at the Theatre. The Chairman said it was difficult to select pieces that suited all classes. What suited the undergraduates did not suit the townspeople, and the undergraduates were some of their best patrons, and they had to cater for them very often, when they would like to give, perhaps, a really better class entertainment. They did the best they could. That was the reason that they had never played at a loss for a whole week. One of the best sources of income in a small way was the hiring of opera glasses

1897 07 13

1898

Cambridge Pierrots 1st performance, Beaconsfield Hall [5.9]

1898 07 25

George Baynes, proprietor of the newly opened wax works exhibition in Petty Cury, Cambridge, was summoned for carrying on his show without the permission of the mayor. Dr Cooper (looking at the wax works programme): I see this is a regular chamber of horrors Sergeant Baker said he had told the defendant he was liable to a penalty of £20 and advised him to close the show. The defendant however said he did not think it was necessary as he had a similar show eleven years ago without permission. He kept the exhibition open till 10 o'clock and a large number of persons visited it, the crowd causing great inconvenience in the street. The bench inflicted a fine of 20s 1898 07 25

1898 11 05

That electricity is a great boon everyone is prepared to admit, but we shall enjoy better when scientists have solved more of its mysteries, and when it has dropped the tendency to drop and die away just at the time when it is most required. The New Theatre is one establishment where loss of light means loss of money. The incandescent lamps with which the interior is efficiently illuminated drooped and finally the current failed all together. Having been accustomed to brilliant electric light, the fact that the theatre was illuminated by means of ordinary lamps gave rise to much comment amongst the audience. As far as the stage was concerned the management had taken the precaution of retaining the gas. However before the performance commenced the truant current resumed its ordinary course and gave the steady light which continued the remainder of the evening c1898 11 05

1899

Rodney Dramatic Club formed

1899 12 20

In noticing the entertainment given at the Conservative Club by the Cambridge Pierrots, we would at the outset congratulate the management upon shortening the programme. No more enjoyable evening can be spent in listening to the excellent numbers contributed by that talented troupe but we may say that three hours is somewhat of a strain on the troupe and audience alike. As it was a programme of twenty-six items was got through. The sextette, "Oh! see the lambkins play" is undoubtedly one of the best items c1899 12 20

1900

1900 06 19

A very attractive programme is presented at the popular hall in Auckland Road, Cambridge, this week. One of the most enjoyable items is kept to the last – Edison's Concertphone. This machine is Edison's own invention and is vastly superior to the phonograph. It is manipulated by Mr Oliver.

Most of the records were taken by Mr Oliver himself and are well up to date – indeed one of the best was that of Dan Leno singing “The waiter”, which was taken but six days ago. The records of the bands are very fine indeed, each instrument being very distinctly reproduced and heard in every part of the house 00 06 19

1900 09 25

There is that about the re-opening of the Cambridge Theatre after the ‘Long’ which is unique. In other towns a re-opening night is a great night. In the stalls and circle are seen the ladies, bright and brilliant; and an array of men in dress suits. In the pit are the ‘pitties; in the galleries the ‘gods’. Not so at the New Theatre when the doors are reopened. The stalls are occupied by those who will in a week or two be sitting in a lowlier part of the Theatre and so on right through the house. But few other towns have long vacations. A fortnight’s time and there will be a normal theatre aspect CDN 1900 09 25

1901 02 08

Sir: The directors of the New Theatre have under consideration plans for doing away with what has most undoubtedly been a great discomfort. We refer to the fact that we have not had enough space for men to smoke in between the acts. The rooms provided are too small and, as a consequence, the undergraduates smoke in the passages, the smoke pervades the house and the ladies are, in many cases, deterred from coming – T. Hyde Hills 01 02 08

1901 11 22

Mr W.B. Redfern enters today upon his twentieth year of theatrical management in Cambridge. He is a personal friend of Sir Henry Irving and all the leaders of the theatrical world. He has been instrument in eradicating prejudice against the theatre in Cambridge and in vindicating the possibilities of the drama in the moral elevation of the people. In managing a theatre in a University town he had peculiar difficulties to overcome but he is entitled to congratulation on all that he has achieved. The New Theatre is one of the best in Britain CDN 1901 11 22

1902 05

Proposed Palace of Varieties, Auckland Rd opposed [1.9]

1902 02 28

The Cambridge Review refers to the conduct of three undergraduates whose behaviour disgusted all respectable people at the New Theatre. But the acts to which reference is made – loud talking during the performance, inopportune laughter and the evident watchfulness for double entendre – are condemned by the great body of undergraduate theatre-goers. To drag an offender out during the middle of the play would cause disturbance and annoyance to the audience. Mr Redfern has instead reported their names to their tutors who have seen that punishment has been administered. The few silly young men who still act in this way will find it prudent to amend their manners. 02 02 28

1902 03 11

Joseph Poole’s Myriorama, now showing at Cambridge Guildhall, takes the form of a tour round the world. Much is made of the South African war and the mechanical sound of the canon roaring enhances the realism of the spectacle. Particularly good is the battlefield by night and a bivouac on the veldt. The tour ends in a grand display depicting shipping in which are faithfully portrayed some of the principal vessels in the navy. 02 03 11

1902 04 03

Thomas Askham applied for a licence for the public performance of stage plays at the Circus of Varieties, Auckland Road, Cambridge and presented a petition of 900 signatures in favour. The Committee would recommend it on condition that the old buildings were pulled down, that electric light was placed throughout and at least four hydrants connected with the water supply. Plans would have to be produced. Mr Askham intimated his willingness to do so. 02 04 03

1902 06 04

The following notice has been issued by the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University. "Whereas the attendance of members of the University at certain public exhibitions, performances and places of dramatic entertainment has been productive of grave disorder, notice is given that the attendance of any member in statu pupillari at the Circus of Varieties, Auckland Road, is prohibited and will render him liable to be punished by suspension, rustication, expulsion or otherwise." 02 06 04

1902 09 02

An entirely new company is responsible for the programme at the Auckland Road Circus, Cambridge this week. The judicious mixture of "turns" by music hall artists and items by circus performers of the old stamp seems to find favour with Cambridge audiences. Miss Babette Rose, a clever vocalist and dancer merited the applause awarded her. Ecnarf, a wire walker was vigorously applauded and one of the most enjoyable items was a clever act on horseback by Miss Daniels. The Sisters Korosko Bale gave a clever exhibition of juggling, a feature being their performing pigeons. 02 09 02

1902 11 21

Mr W.B. Redfern, the managing director of the New Theatre Company, Cambridge, is an attractive and familiar personality. He has completed twenty years of continuous theatrical management, which constitutes a record. The theatre in Cambridge has had to struggle hard for recognition and toleration; it has had to combat opposition to make its way to favour in the minds of those most ignorant of its possibilities. He has won almost all – we say 'almost' because there still lurk in the minds of reactionary and antiquated brains some feelings of prejudice which the theatre had yet to overcome. 02 11 21

1902 11 24

At Cambridge court Mr Redfern, director of the New Theatre, renewed application for licences to allow two children, aged 10 and nine, to perform at the theatre with Mr Edward Terry's company. The children's performance was not an acrobatic one; they simply came on and had some lines to repeat. They were under the watchful eye of a governess and their parents were travelling with the company which was on tour and acting every night. It was not unusual for the Government inspector to run down from Norwich to visit theatres in which children were acting and had always been satisfied. 02 11 24

1902 12 30

The Auckland Road Circus, Cambridge, has re-opened under the name of the Empire Circus of Varieties and enjoyment of an excellent nature is assured at each performance. Several excellent 'turns' are included in this week's programme including the London serio-vocalist comedian, George Egerton and the first appearance in Cambridge of Leno, the midget comedian. The Great Dakota, an American necromancer in original stage illusions, keeps the audience in wonderment and laughter from the start. 02 12 30

1903 03 06

Thomas Askham was summoned for presenting a stage play, "Robinson Crusoe", at the Grand Circus and Hippodrome, Auckland Road, Cambridge, the building not being licensed as a theatre. There was pantomime action and considerable dialogue in verse. There was a temporary stage with scenery at the back and footlights. But it could not be described as a play, it was only an entertainment. The Theatre catered for the 'Varsity and the better classes and the more humble people went to this music-hall and circus. 03 03 06[4.4]

1903 04 06

An inquest was held on the former assistant manager of the Empire Theatre of Varieties, Cambridge. He had deposited £10 as security on taking the post and after he had held the position for a month this was to be returned to him in instalments. But the company was a failure and he had lost his savings in the venture. He had pawned his watch for half-a-crown and said he did not have a farthing. But he had £40 in his bank and his mind must have been deranged by his theatrical reverses. 03 04 06

1903 04 28

Mr Askham applied for a theatrical licence for the Auckland Road Circus, Cambridge. A dramatic performance was instructive to the working classes and tended to keep them out of public houses. But those who were labouring in connection with the various religious organisations felt strongly it would be injurious to the morals of the people. As soon as the audience came out they were 'on the Common in the dark'. A poster for one play contained the figure of a young lady almost in a state of nudity and if a man took his wife or daughter in the vicinity of it the ladies would hardly know where to put their heads. 03 04 28

1903 05 14

A section of noisy undergraduates at a performance of 'Naughty Nancy' at the New Theatre behaved in an unruly manner. Remarks, many of them in bad taste, and incessant shouting delayed the progress of the comedy and Mr Redfern, the Managing Director appeared on the stage. For 20 years he had had the management and until the last three or four such conduct was perfectly unheard of. He said he was sure they would cease this ungentlemanly conduct but if they continued he would simply drop the curtain and the performance would cease. Cries of 'Good old Redfern' were heard at the conclusion of the protest. They speedily subsided and the performance was concluded quietly. 03 05 14

1904 01 02

The terrible catastrophe at the Iroquois Theatre Chicago has caused English theatrical managers to overhaul their precautions against fire. Mr Redfern has caused the whole of the arrangements for the Cambridge New Theatre to be made as safe as possible. The stage and foot lights are all electric, it is amply provided with fire hoses and experienced firemen are told off each night. The hydrants are on the high-pressure main and they have all desirable exits. The greatest danger is panic but every man, woman and child had the means of getting out of the building. He has timed the people making their exit and it had never exceeded four minutes, without one emergency door being opened. 04 01 02

1904 01 06

New Theatre suffers in commercial depression, Ellen Terry visits [4.12]

1904 02 02

There was another infringement of the rules for preserving order at the Cambridge Theatre and three undergraduates were ejected. They occupied seats in the front row of the stalls and commented somewhat too audibly on the subject of the piece. When requested to leave two quietly complied but their companion remained seated and accordingly two attendants were instructed to remove him by force. The undergraduate, seeing that his ejection had been determined upon, capitulated in time to avoid the indignity of being roughly handled. "Don't take me out, my dear sir", he pleaded. "I will go out quietly". He did so. It was not necessary on this occasion to stop the performance. 04 02 02

1904 04 02

New Theatre production again disrupted, scenes howled down; undergraduates fined for obscene language [4.5]

1904 04 05

A new era in the chequered existence of Cambridge's second place of entertainment, the Empire in Auckland Road, has opened. Hitherto its reputation for providing entertainment has not been entirely faultless but the new programme revealed a pleasant change and there was a packed audience. Performers included an impersonator of characters in the works of Charles Dickens, the Danby-Gordon Trio who displayed a tragic interlude entitled 'The Penalty' and Miss Gladys Fontaine, a singer with a cultivated contralto voice. Two comedians amused with 'patter' and songs of 'nonsense rhymes' and music was supplied by Miss Zetti Handel's Ladies Orchestra. 04 04 05

1904 07 19

Cambridge New Theatre had a poor year. The depression affected the well-to-do people who sent their sons up to University and naturally the first thing a young man was warned about was not to be

extravagant about his amusement. The theatre being the chief amusement it was the first thing the undergraduate cut off. The New Theatre endeavoured to spend as much money as possible with local tradesmen but they went to London for their amusements, which was very hard lines. Several companies cancelled their engagements but good companies with people like Ellen Terry had been unable to half-fill the theatre which spoke very badly for the taste of the Cambridge audience. 04 07 19

1905 02 25

The Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club completed its 50th year of existence with a dinner in the Guildhall. It has experienced financial embarrassment and its defaulting cashier; it has been served with writs; in its early days it suffered from something nearly akin to ostracism. A Royal patron and social and official recognition followed. The first performances were given in lodgings over a shop in Trinity Street, then moved to a room at the Hoop Hotel. In 1856 one of its members while escorting some ladies to a ball underwent the unpleasant experience of being served with a writ for £50 due to a carpenter 05 02 25

1905 05 02

The University and the New Theatre have joined hands to warn undergraduates that ungentlemanly behaviour will not be tolerated. A warning was placed in every programme and supplemented by a speech between the acts by J.W. Clark, registry of the University and Chairman of the Theatre Company. His words were received with respect by the audience, already in high spirits by a splendid production of the 'Mikado'. He was loudly cheered as he walked on to the stage and at the conclusion he was accorded quite an ovation. 05 05 02a

1905 09 12

The Auckland Road variety theatre, Cambridge is now known as the Hippodrome. It has been taken over by Geo. Saphrini who has experience at the Britannia Theatre, Glasgow and Alex Aubrey who has performed at all the principal halls in Great Britain. Although the old circus ring has been retained there were no equestrian turns but Professor Garford's performing dogs and pigeons proved very wonderful and the hundreds who filled the building saw feats of agility and strength and extraordinary examples of human dexterity.. The programme was to have concluded with a bioscope exhibition but owing to a mishap with the lamp the pictures could not be shown. 05 09 12

1905 10 14

The English-speaking race are mourning the death of the greatest theatrical figure of modern times, Sir Henry Irvine. He received an honorary degree from Cambridge University and maintained a keen interest in Mr Redfern's struggle to free theatrical performances from the strangling control of the University. He was to have visited the New Theatre on his farewell provincial tour next year. 05 10 14a & b

1905 10 24

Having been closed for a week when it was handed over to the care of the carpenter, the Hippodrome, on Newmarket Road Cambridge reopened. The performances will now be carried out on the music hall principles, the old form of ring having been dispensed with and a large and spacious stage erected with all the necessary scenery and curtains. There will be one performance nightly with half-prices after nine o'clock. The Carr Brothers kept the house in a constant state of applause by their wonderful manipulation of a large inflated ball 05 10 24

1905 10 25

The licensee of the Cambridge Hippodrome made a claim for breach of contract against Charles Prinz, described as 'the most wonderful and sensational lion tamer on earth'. He had agreed to perform for a week at a salary of £40 but had taken another engagement at the Olympia, Liverpool. As a result their takings had fallen to £30, compared to £112 the week before. The Hippodrome would seat about 2,000 people and £25 had been taken one evening. The judge said that in his undergraduate

days the University would not allow a theatre to pollute the atmosphere. They had changed their views since then. 05 10 25

1906

ADC - Rupert Brooke makes first appearance on stage [7.8]

1906 06 19

Thomas Askham, proprietor of the Hippodrome, Auckland Road applied for a licence for the performance of stage plays. The University had protested that a theatre near the common was detrimental to undergraduates but it would not be used as a low type of music hall, rather as a proper theatre for the poor classes at a time when students were not in residence. However the neighbourhood would not attract a first-class company and a lower type of entertainment would be detrimental to the morals of the people. 06 06 19a & b

1906 07 26

Thomas Askham applied for a licence to stage plays at the Hippodrome, Auckland Road. It was built for the poorer classes of Cambridge for whom there was no such accommodation. Plays would be presented of a high moral flavour such as 'East Lynne' & 'The Harbour Lights' which would have a good effect on the public. He would provide healthy amusement in a proper building. But local ministers felt it would not tend for the highest welfare of the people. The application was refused. 06 07 26

1906 10 12

The arrival in this country [in 1952] of the greatest film mime of them all, Charlie Chaplin, has released a flood of memories. I have the programme of a production of "Sherlock Holmes" at the New Theatre in January 1906. It includes 'Billy ... Master Charles Chaplin'. Charlie was then 16. Among the adults in the cast was his brother. Charlie has announced that he intends making a sight-seeing tour while he is here. I hope he will consider Cambridge., 06 10 12a, 52 09 27

1908

Hippodrome licensed after acrimonious debate [1.10]

1908

Marlowe Society formed to perform Faustus with Rupert Brooke as President & George Keynes as Secretary (continued to produce an Elizabethan play each year) [4.19]

1908 03 20

Undergraduate misbehaviour, New Theatre – 08 03 20a

1908 10 23

Thomas Askham, manager of the Hippodrome, Auckland Road, was convicted of staging a play, 'Sally in Our Alley' which had not been approved by the Lord Chamberlain in a building which had three times been refused a licence. Afterwards he announced that it would be turned into a picture palace and a first-class, up-to-date set of animated pictures would be presented. The old artistes would not get the sack but would sing to them every night and have their 'funniosities' all the same. He would also apply for a dramatic licence. The Hippodrome was required in Cambridge by the working classes – as a working-class theatre. CWN 08 10 23 p3, CWN 08 10 30 p3

1908 12 03

There is a rule at the New Theatre which decrees that undergraduates may not charter a box unless they are accompanied by a lady. So four fertile brains sought to overcome it. No relative of the softer sex being available it was determined that one of the four should undergo sufficient outward transformation to satisfy the authorities. The charming gown was of white satin bespangled with sequins designed by Kate Reilly of Dover Street, the beautiful head of hair was done by Clarkson who came down himself to direct the final 'touching up'. The group dined at Buol's and taxied to the

theatre. But what happened afterwards and how the 'lady' was smuggled into college we are not at liberty to divulge CDN 08 12 03

1909 01 22

Cambridge New Theatre was built on the site of an arcade of small shops from St Andrew's Street to Parkside. The arcade became a roller-skating rink but this proved a bad speculation. It was taken by the Conservative Club who christened it St Andrew's Hall, where amateur theatrical performances were sometimes held. Mr Redfern leased the building which he reconstructed and in 1882 the first performance was given in 'The Theatre Royal'. Then in 1895 the foundation stone of the New Theatre was laid 09 01 22

1909 03 01

The University Pentacle Club gave their annual performance covering most of the usual forms of magic. There were impressive sleight-of-hand acts with Mr S. Bosanquet adept with billiard balls while Mr Edward Beck's 'Magical Moments' included threading needles in the mouth and the spiriting away of two live doves in a collapsible box. Dramatic effect was cleverly combined with magic in 'N'orrible Murder' by Messrs Branson, Wheeler and Eacott. But the thought-reading act by Mr Hayes seemed a little strained. 09 03 01

1909 04 16

Cambridge actress, Hilda Evelyn, Bijou ADC – 09 04 16

1909 05 14

Miss Florence Gower was well-known as an amateur actress and musician who played leading lady in productions of the Rodney Amateur Dramatic Society. She received her education at Miss Bowen's school, Islip House, and studied music under Mrs Hague Ingram of Lyndwode Road. She frequently played at private receptions and 'at homes' and occasionally sang in public. Some mystery surrounds her death 09 05 14

1910

1910 16 24

The New Theatre being closed, the rowdy section of undergraduates have turned their attention to the Hippodrome, despite the fact that the house is 'out of bounds'. Last week some 40 or 50 attended nightly – of course without cap and gown – which made things generally uncomfortable. On Friday some beat time to the music on the backs of the musicians while others, spying some young ladies began, in full view of the audience, to make protestations of undying affection to them. Later they pelted artistes with bars of chocolate and lighted cigarette ends before the orchestra played 'God save the King' and the curtain was lowered to shrieks, whistling and shouting from the disappointed audience. 10 06 24e

1911

Undergraduates forbidden to take part in any musical or dramatic entertainment in public room outside University Society [5.5]

1911

University versatile dramatic club formed [5.7]

1911

Repertory movement launched, supplies great need in Cambridge [5.6]

1911 01 06

At the New Theatre Mr Milton Bode with the assistance of clever scene-painters, musicians with melodies, marvellous modistes and a tip-top cast has made nearly three hours of fun and spectacle out of the history of Cinderella, the prettiest fairy story ever dressed up in pantomime. The catchy music, dainty dresses and refreshing humour provide an evening of unflagging enjoyment. Never was there a

Baronial hall so well stocked with entertaining people without the usual troublesome outsiders who stop the story because they want to ring bells or spin plates 11 01 06

1912

Playhouse opens (3.23)

1912 01 19

A splendid test of the safety of the New Theatre in the event of an alarm of fire was carried out on Saturday night when it was found that 1,400 people passed from the Theatre in less than four minutes. The audience had no knowledge that a test was taking place and the staff had no orders except to throw open all auditorium doors and emergency exits. The house was crowded to its fullest extent and, as it was pantomime week, there was an exceptional number of children. The result is of particular interest as the New Theatre is to be used periodically as a cinematograph and variety theatre in which people are needlessly nervous of fire 12 01 19b

1912 02 02

Dickens Centenary, Guildhall, Cambridge, February 6th 1912. Messrs Grant & Lane beg to announce Frank Speaight Dickens Recitals. Pickwick. Tickets: reserved seats three shillings, second seats two shillings, admission one shilling. Schools, not less than 10, special terms. – Advertisement 12 02 02

1912 02 03

Proposal to ban smoking at new Theatre rejected, “delighted to see it” [5.1]

1912 02 16

Sidney Gandy was one of the ablest of our society entertainers. As a ventriloquist he had few equals and his skill in thought-reading was exceptional. He had been a keen sportsman, organist, choirmaster and schoolteacher at Histon before leaving in 1887 to take up the professional life. Strange to relate the directors of the Histon Institute wrote to engage Mr Gandy for their forthcoming annual entertainment on the very day he met with his accident – 12 02 16d & e

1912 02 24

Notes re undergraduate misbehaviour at theatre [5.2]

1912 08 02

New Theatre annual report – 12 08 02a

1912 11 29

Sophocles’ ‘Oedipus Tyrannus’ was performed in the original Greek at the New Theatre by members of the University. The performance was in every way beautiful and intensely impressive. How much time and work it must have cost everyone concerned can only be guessed. There was a distinguished audience and a sincere enthusiasm which stamped the performance as a true success. 12 11 29d

1913 01 03

The members of the company who are appearing in pantomime at the New Theatre had a narrow escape whilst travelling from Wolverhampton to Cambridge. Whilst the theatrical special was at a standstill, a passenger train ran into it from behind, but fortunately no life was lost. Mr Milton Bode’s Company, consisting of about 50 actors and actresses was fortunately in the front of the train and beyond severe shocks, escaped without injury. Also travelling was the ‘Wild Australia’ Company including eight horses and a number of snakes and alligators. When the actors scrambled from the train they were mixed up with a giant python and an alligator that had escaped from their boxes 13 01 03b

1913 04 18

Sir – A visitor to the Mill Road Picture Palace of Varieties complained that a song with a refrain “But I’m not satisfied, and you’re not satisfied” was very suggestive and the entertainment was too much of

that class. This song is sung in every music hall in the country. It is my aim to provide an entertainment to which men can bring their wives and daughters without embarrassment. My patrons number the most respectable families and if I were to allow anything questionable, they would cease to patronise me – Fred Hawkins, The Empire, Mill Road. 13 04 18 p7 CIP

1913 08 04

New Theatre repainted, carpets etc [5.3]

1913 08 22

Jack Hulbert of Ely & Gonville & Caius, who made a 'hit' both in Cambridge and London in 'Cheer-Oh Cambridge' the musical comedy of his own construction, has been engaged by Mr Robert Courtneidge for the forthcoming production of his new musical play at the Shaftsbury Theatre. Miss Cicely Courtneidge (fresh from a holiday in South Africa) is another member of the notable company. 13 08 22 p5 CIP

1913 08 22

New Theatre Company – few new productions but growth revivals, competition from picture shows and variety undergraduates' conduct 13 08 22 p7 CIP

1913 09 05

Cambridge actor-manager, Greig laws leader of Cambridge Repertory Theatre movement 13 09 05 p7 CIP

1913 09 26

Gaiety Theatre, Auckland Road advert 13 09 26 p6 CIP, 13 10 03 p6; reopens

1913 10 10

The Gaiety Theatre in Auckland Road has been opened and a large audience attracted by the excellent programme presented. The Gaiety Players gave a comic song 'Naughty Boy', popular London comedienne Miss May Mars sang two pretty songs and the eccentric comedian, Charles Cranston contributed to the entertainment. The inside of the building has been made very comfortable. Electric lights hang from the false ceiling, there a plush tip-ups in the orchestra stalls and the curtains with which the gallery is hung give a pleasing air of warmth and colour. 13 10 10 p10 CIP

1914 04

Band of Hope pageant, Old Stourbridge fair [5.10]

1914 07 02

The Eastern Counties Circus Company, better known as the Gaiety Theatre, Auckland Road, was incorporated in September 1913. The management spent lavishly on fittings, furniture & advertising but expenditure always exceeded receipts. Then the managing director resigned and Torben Ltd worked it as a cinematograph theatre and variety show. But they made no money and left. Since then it has been empty. Now it is to close 14 07 02

1914 07 24

New Theatre & Redfern; since he had been a little boy at school in Dorset he founded theatres. In the old days they had to put up with rowdy entertainments in the Town Hall and the town had appreciated his efforts. They had done very well on the bars – not so much on sale of drink but sweets, chocolates and temperance drinks. Picture palaces on wane, university behaviour getting better 14 07 24

1915 01 22

Military Hospital Concert.—The New Theatre Company and the variety artistes who were appearing at the Theatre gave an enjoyable performance at the 1st Eastern General Hospital on Friday afternoon. The arrangements were made by Mr. P. H. Adams, the box office manager, and Mr. J. Lindsell superintended the staging. The full orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Gilbey Briggs, was in

attendance. The large company of wounded soldiers, nurses, semi-convalescents, and members of the R.A.M.C. showed the greatest appreciation of the programme provided 15 01 22 CIPof

1915 07 09

Walter Curtis, proprietor of portable theatre applied to erect in field adjacent Red Dragon Fordham 15 07 09 p7

1915 08 13

New Theatre annual report, theatrical profession & war by Redfern; free admission soldiers & nurses 15 08 13

1915 10 06

Bijou Amateur Dramatic Club – history – W.B. Redfern - 15 10 06c, pt2 – 15 10 13c; pt3 – 15 10 20c Ch

1916

Light Blues musical farce of Cambridge life 37 08 14

1916 07 26

New Theatre's coming of age; Ald W.B. Redfern's unique record – feature – 16 07 26c

1919 01

Footlights Club reopens after war [2.12]

1919 11 01

Proctors visit New Theatre for first time to correct undergraduate misbehaviour - stink bombs etc [5.11]

1920

1922

George Rylands, President of Marlowe Society plays 'Diomedes' in Troilus & Cressida & encourages young photographer named Cecil Beaton [3.12, 2.2]

1922 11 02

The performance of the musical comedy "My Nieces" at the New Theatre was delayed for ten minutes as the result of the unsportsmanlike behaviour of a number of undergraduates in the stalls. During one scene one of the young men threw a jumping cracker on the stage. The members of the company were startled and cries of indignation arose from all parts of the house. The manager had the curtain lowered and the stage cleared. The Proctor and "bulldogs" appeared on the scene, being received with the customary cheers. After a number of names had been taken a large party of undergraduates left the Theatre, their exit greeted with applause. Afterwards attendants found a number of crackers in the Theatre 22 11 02

1923 03 31

The forthcoming production by the Bijou amateurs brings into prominence once again a club that has held a big position in the life of Cambridge for the last 50 years. In 1870 Mr W B Redfern founded the Bijous, who took over premises on Peas Hill, where for many years was provided the only dramatic performance in Cambridge that were given with any regularity. As time went on the club found that the old Peas Hill theatre was not big enough for them and finally removed to the old skating rink in St Andrews's street, on the site of which the present New Theatre was built. It was not until 1881 that ladies were introduced into the cast, the female parts having before that date being taken by men 23 03 31

1923 09 11

This week is the last of a successful variety season at the New Theatre, Cambridge, and the programme forms a very attractive wind-up. It consists of comedy and more serious turns combined in very acceptable proportion; all the turns are quite good and very entertaining. Gaston Morrel is a comedian of a type but little known to Cambridge, in that he never says a word. His turn is called "Cleaning a lamp" and since a certain beverage of inebriating properties and a ladder are used, then there is some excitement. Laura and Kaley, a couple of witty ladies attired as school girls, sing and tell funny stories. Nan Foster, a vocalist with a pleasing soprano voice, sings some charming songs. Joe Cohan and Anna Dorothy play the old old comedy of the quarrelling husband and wife, their turn being known as "Two Wise Fools". Fred Keeton, a comedian is a very cheerful soul, with a partiality for donuts with jam in the middle. He sings a lengthy ballad on the trials and tribulations of a fireman
23 09 11

1923 09 28

Charles Coborn, the veteran comedian famous for his singing of "Two Lovely Black Eyes" and "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" recalls an early visit to Cambridge: "We were drummed out of Cambridge a day before we had arranged to leave because of having infringed some Medo-Persian law of the Vice-Chancellor by stationing ourselves on market day in some prohibited place". He also met two gypsy brothers named Smith who lived in caravans and supported themselves by chair mending. One was father of the now well-known Gypsy Rodney Smith. 23 09 28

1924 04 19

That enterprising organisation the Cambridgeshire Band of Hope Union, under the energetic direction of Mr and Mrs David Moore, are giving the pageant of old Cambridge, "Olde Sturbridge Fair" in the Guildhall next week. This pageant was first produced in 1914 with great success. It has now been re-written and includes a weird and fantastic scene with a witch and her retinue of Cambridgeshire imps, with which she hopes to work dire evil on Cambridge town. It is hoped schoolteachers will take parties of children to see this locally historical pageant 24 04 19

1924 07 08

The quality of the entertainment presented by the People's Theatre, East Rd, Cambridge, by Mr James Weight is, with occasional lapses, "getting better and better". Messrs Harvey and Taylor's "Boom" company provides enough laughter in the two hours' programme to make even "Dismal Jimmy" unbend. Miss Dorothy Owen, is a charming soubrette with a speciality as a clever child mimic, and Will Osborne, a light comedian, is no stranger to Cambridge. He did much concert work on behalf of Addenbrooke's Hospital in the war days 24 07 08

1924 07 11

King's Meadow and Fellow's Garden made an ideal setting for such a gay function as the Cambridge Pageant and Gala held there yesterday. The chief attraction was the pageant depicting Stourbridge Fair in 1450, a brilliant affair for which the Women's Institutes were responsible. Over 500 performers took part. Among the gay throng were monks and nuns in the sober habits of their orders and an undergraduate or two. Morris dancers, jongleurs and mummers, with a dancing bear have a merry performance 24 07 11

1925

Ralph Richardson appears at New Theatre [4.9]

1925 09 18

The danger arising from coins being thrown on to a theatre stage was emphasised when a man was fined £1 for damaging an electric bulb in the New Theatre. The bulb was splintered and flying glass might have gone into the eyes of the artistes and cause serious injury. Defendant said he threw two halfpennies to a comedian because he did not like the song he was singing. He did not know a bulb was broken 25 09 18

1926 04 24

The old Theatre Royal, Barnwell, has been acquired for a repertory theatre. The auditorium is to be re-seated and the stage remodelled and equipped on modern lines. It will have its own company of actors and actresses and a play will be presented each week during term. Mr Herbert Prentice of the Sheffield Repertory Company will be resident producer. The building will be known in future as the Festival Theatre and it is hoped to establish with it a training centre of dramatic art 26 04 24

1926 05

D'Oyley Carte visit New Theatre, long queues [2.15]

1926 11 19

When the new Festival Theatre in Newmarket Road, Cambridge, opens on Monday a fresh phase in the history of the Drama in England will have commenced. Without destroying the principle of the old Theatre Royal, with its memories of the old Regency days, the promoters of this new venture have so adapted the building that it is the most modern and up-to-date in England. The new stage gradually merges into the stalls by a series of shallow steps, behind is a revolving middle stage backed by a raised and sliding backstage with the cylindrical cyclorama as its background. The lighting will be a special feature and the theatre will be warmed by a central heating system 26 11 19 [2.16]

1927 01 15

New Theatre: F.C. Pool new Manager 27 01 15

1927 04 30

Part of the club room of the Footlights Dramatic Club above the Masonic Hall in Corn Exchange Street Cambridge was damaged as a result of a fire with flames coming through the roof. It was fortunate it was discovered early or it would have worked round to a little stage where inflammable material might have created a more alarming blaze. It is feared some photographs of former members of the club have been destroyed. The water came through the ceiling of the Masonic Hall and the fine dance floor was soon flooded. The Rodney Dramatic Club had engaged the Hall for a dinner dance and it may not be available for part of the function. 27 04 30

1927 05

George Bernard Shaw visits Festival Theatre to see a performance of his 'Androcles & the Lion' [2.21]

1927 05 07

The Festival Theatre in Newmarket Road, Cambridge has opened a roof garden. In warm weather there could hardly be anything more pleasanter than a meal on the roof preparatory to seeing the performance below and there is not the slightest doubt that it will be a great attraction to visitors. The view is not extensive, it is true, but the surroundings are novel and amongst undergraduates it will certainly be "the thing to do" as often as funds permit. 27 05 07

1927 05 21

W.B. Yeats visits Festival Theatre [4.1]

1927 08 13

New Theatre installs Samoiloff stage lighting [4.6]

1928 10

New Theatre announces its largest profit - £2,617 [2.22]

1928 10 05

Negotiations have been concluded for a fusion of interests between the Oxford Playhouse and the Festival Theatre, Cambridge and J.B. Fagan and Terence Gray will be jointly responsible for the policy of both theatres. There will be an interchange of companies between Oxford and Cambridge

and the ultimate aim will be the setting up of a theatre in London. When the ensuing term is finished the Oxford Playhouse will be demolished and an entirely new theatre constructed. 28 10 05

1929

University Mummers formed, first group to admit women to full membership (by Alastair Cooke 1928, first performance Central Hall 1929) [2.18, 7.9]

1929 05 29

Festival Theatre changes hands, 29 05 29 p8*

1929 11 05

Cheers greeted George Robey, the great comedian, on his initial entry at the Cambridge New Theatre. This riotous reception came, of course, from a huge contingent of youthful 'Varsitymen' but the theatre was packed in all departments. The brilliant show was carried along by waves of cheering, culminating in a furore at the end and a great roar for a speech to which Mr Robey responded in his own inimitable style and the 'house' departed in good humour. He had never appeared at the New Theatre before and so we had the unique spectacle of a famous father following his son, for Mr Robey junior was up at Cambridge a few years ago and appeared there in two of the Amateur Operatic Society's productions 29 11 05

1929 12 07

Before the war the only real place of amusement in Cambridge was the New Theatre and even that found it necessary to close down when the undergraduates were away. Today we have two theatres, five picture places and frequent amateur productions. Recently I decided to see a show but the Central Cinema had no seats under three shillings unless I queued for two hours. I tried the Festival Theatre but they only had a 'standing seat'; people were fighting to get into the New Theatre and the A.D.C. only had expensive seats left. As I trailed home I wondered where all the people and the money came from 29 12 07

1930

1930 10 04

Many in Cambridge will bid good-bye with regret to F.C. Pool, the general manager of the New Theatre. Despite ever-increasing competition he saw record profits and turnover in his first full year. His successor is Bertram Brown who is not used to the ways of Cambridge undergraduates but has had something to do with Leeds 'medicals' and imagines they are much the same type 30 10 04a

1930 12 06

The visit of Jack Hulbert's popular review carries the mind back to 1913 when he made his first appearance at the New Theatre in the May Week production 'Cheer-oh Cambridge' of the Footlights Dramatic Club. I remember his sprightly dancing, which has since developed so successfully. Then in 1921 we had Claude Hulbert making his first appearance in the Footlights production of 'What a picnic' 30 12 06e

1930 12 27

Stars such as Jack and Claude Hulbert delighted Cambridge audiences in their early days. The latest is Harold Warrender who just two years ago was the mainstay of the University Footlights production, acting in many of the skits. It was very evident that he had great gifts and he is now playing at the Criterion with the famous Alice Delysia in a new farce, 'A Pair of Trousers', making the most of the opportunities it offers 30 12 27d

1931 04 24

Terence Gray profile – 31 04 24a

1932 07 30

New Theatre transformed, upper circle [1.13]

1932 09 03

Festival Theatre working arrangement with Gate Theatre London [1.14]

1933 02 15

Greek play – 33 02 15a & 33 02 15

1933 02 18

Sherlock Holmes play rag recalled 33 02 18a

1933 03 11

Festival Theatre ‘farewell season’ [1.16]

1933 04 20

Terence Gray has been connected with the Festival Theatre for seven years. Many of his productions have aroused the most intense antagonism and many times caused me to gnash my teeth and anger. It has always been a place of experiment. It set out to present the best plays in a modern manner, introducing new devices: the cyclorama, atmospheric lighting, formalised scenery. Controversies were frequent. But his work was never boring and frequently exciting. I would not have missed any of the productions. 33 04 20 & a

1933 04 22

New Theatre manager Bertram Brown leaving [1.15]

1933 05 13

Keen regret has been expressed that Terence Gray proposes to give up his directorship of the Festival Theatre at the close of term, after seven years of magnificent work. Efforts are being made in University circles to enable the theatre to continue. Mr J.G. Macleod has expressed a wish to run a Festival season, but his plans depend on a guaranteed sum of £4,000. He has produced, acted and written for the theatre but is not one of those who believes in queerness for the sake of queerness. 33 05 13b

1933 06 17

The New Theatre has closed for the Summer Vacation by which time it will probably be converted into a ‘talkie’ house. Even star actors have failed to attract crowded houses – apart from the D’Oyly Carte Company. It will mean the throwing out of work of over 100 staff, several of whom have given many years to its service. In nearly every town the story is the same. Owing to the competition of the talking films the theatres are suffering as never before. As many as 157 have closed in the past twelve months. 33 06 17a

1933 07 25

Cambridge’s New theatre is to be run as a cinema but every effort will be made to continue some theatrical form of entertainment. It has been leased to Mr P.V. Wallis who was the originator of the Central Cinema ten years ago and later took over the Tivoli and Playhouse cinemas. A Western Electric sound projector system will be installed together with some structural alterations and it is hoped to reopen in September. 33 07 25, 33 08 15

1933 08 12

Festival Theatre rescued by J.G. Macleod with £2,800; has difficulties finding contemporary plays [1.17]

1933 08 14

Old time minstrel entertainment and Memories of the old Arcade – 33 08 14

1933 08 18

Sir – it is a disgrace to Cambridge that our only theatre, the New Theatre, should close like it has done and have to re-open as a cinema. It used to be the finest in the Eastern Counties. When such attractions as Ruth Draper, Jack Payne and Matheson Lang visited it was packed and many people were turned away. But they put up prices and had too many variety shows instead of good plays and musical comedies – Lionel Cherry 33 08 18

1933 09

George Robey, knighted in the New Year's Honours, appeared at Cambridge Guildhall with a variety company in the 1920s and made his last appearance at the New Theatre in September 1933. The Daily Express asserts that he took a science degree at Jesus College and was an engineer for four years. In his autobiography Robey claims to have had part of his education in Cambridge but says his father's speculations went wrong and his undergraduate dream had to be dropped. Now Dr Brittain, keeper of the records at the college, has proved that he never was a member of Jesus, although he had once hoped to become one. 54 01 16

1933 11

ADC stage & scenery dock destroyed by fire [3.15]

1933 12 06

Godwin Hunt was one of the most popular comedians and vocalists that Cambridge has ever known. Born at Soham, he was associated with many famous theatrical enterprises including the D'oyly Carte Opera before becoming Lay Clerk at St John's College. He was the founder, 30 years ago, of the Magpies Concert Party which enjoyed a tremendous vogue when amusements were not so plentiful as today. Up to the war they were a male voice quartet but then it became a mixed concert party who travelled far beyond Cambridgeshire. 33 12 06

1933 12 30

Cambridge's New Theatre has been hit by the theatrical slump which began in London in 1932. There was a shortage of plays in the provinces and the alternative of plays eked out by variety shows had failed. The Directors have been unable to let the Theatre to a repertory company and had no choice except to run it as a cinema with occasional stage plays until the present financial depression has passed away 33 12 30

1934 02 26

Play performed in Bloy's smithy, East Road – 34 02 26

1934 03 17

Kings College offer to rebuild A.D.C. following fire, rejected [1.20]

1934 06 02

A.D.C. issue appeal following fire [1.21]

1934 06 09

Rumours that Festival Theatre to close are denied, [1.22]

1934 06 30

Festival Theatre starts Cambridge first repertory [1.23]

1934 10 10

'Overture to Cambridge' had its premiere at the Festival Theatre. The play, written and produced by the Director, Joseph Gordon Macleod, exposes the pettiness of Town Gown and University. It tells of an invalided idealistic Mayor who comes to be regarded as a madman. His wife is killed in a car accident, his daughter becomes deranged and he falls to his death whilst addressing a meeting after

being 'debugged' by a crowd of undergraduates. As he hovers between life and death he sees the future, with people living in the co-operative ideal which he preached. 34 10 10

1934 10 19

Fred Tuck was a great performer on the concert platform. 'Funny Fred' was a comedian but also a conjurer, juggler, tumbler, raconteur and trick cyclist. His most popular character was that of an old-fashioned clown in traditional make-up. His most famous trick was to balance a burning newspaper, made into a cone, on his nose until it had practically burnt out. He would make his exit balancing a chair on his nose, or the table he had been using for his tricks, if it was not too heavy. 34 10 19

1934 12 15

Arts Theatre Company registered [2.2]

1935 01 17

The new A.D.C. Theatre in Park Street was opened by Miss Ellaline Terriss replacing the one destroyed by fire 14 months ago. It was a wonder it had not burnt down every time the stage was used years ago, as there was no fire-proof curtain, the theatre was lit entirely by gas and the proscenium made of painted canvas stretched on wood batons, reminisced E. Mellish Clark 35 01 17

1935 02 07

Cecil Beeton makes name as dress designer at ADC TT 7.2.1925

1935 04 26

Festival closure announced: claims "Cambridge does not want us" [1.3];

1935 04 27

The news that the Festival Theatre is definitely closing will come as a severe blow. When Joseph Gordon Macleod took over from Terence Gray two years ago he set out to make it a very definite part of the life of Cambridge. Not only has he worked tremendously hard but he has also sacrificed every penny of his personal capital and it a great blow that Cambridge has not supported him. One is equally sorry for the company which was developing into one of the strongest repertory companies in the country. Now they will be split up. 35 04 27

1935 05 11

A.D.C. announces that it 'welcomes town' [2.4]

1935 05 17

"Save the Festival" meeting [1.4]

1935 06 08

The finest Chinese actor of today, Mr Mei Lan-fang, who has to have a three-strong bodyguard to protect him from kidnappers, visited the Festival Theatre. He granted the News his first interview ever to an English newspaper as Chinese actors have a genuine dislike of publicity in every shape and form. Since Mr Mei could not speak English, and the reporter knew no Chinese, the conversation was conducted through an interpreter. He is actually a female impersonator for in China women do not take part in classical drama. 35 06 08

1935 06 20

The Theatre Cinema returned to a programme of cine-variety with a programme of stage turns and films. The variety bill is headed by that inimitable comedian, Max Miller, 'the cheeky chappy'. All his jokes have the air of spontaneity and his suggestion of breezy good humour is infectious. The stage programme includes the most daring roller-skating acts we have seen, a juggler and a young lady who has achieved success as a wireless crooner. The principal film is 'The Personality Kid' with a clever cartoon and the News. 35 06 20

1935 08 06

The management of the Theatre Cinema (New Theatre) have returned to their popular cine-variety policy. There are four excellent stage turns and an exceptionally fine film. A snappily presented singing and dancing act featuring Jack Lewis and his Rolling Stones with the Wellington Sisters forms the principal item in the stage show, combining dancing by a cheery trio, saxophone work and percussion 'fireworks'. Savona is a remarkable juggler while 'the racketeers of mirth, Roy Lester and Jack Cranston offer a quick-fire cross-talk act. Finally Sereno and June's head-to-head balancing and tumbling act has much which is new even in these days when vaudeville simply abounds with this kind of act. 35 08 06a

1935 10 07

Joseph Gordon Macleod, director of the Festival Theatre, has announced its closure because of lack of further capital – 35 10 07a

1935 10 11

Festival Theatre "not to close permanently" [1.5]

1936 01 17

It is many years since Raymond Bennett was a Cambridge semi-professional entertainer who made early appearances in cine-variety at the Playhouse, Mill Road. He has progressed rapidly and Cambridge audiences now have an opportunity of seeing him at the Theatre Cinema with his partner of many broadcasts. Bennett and McNaughton have achieved great success on the music halls, including the Holborn Empire, and have attained great popularity as broadcasting stars. Those who have listened to their broadcasts will be glad of this opportunity of renewing acquaintance with a popular local artiste 36 01 17

1936 02 04

The Cambridge Arts Theatre opened with a gala performance by the Vic-Walls Ballet Company. It is a beautiful piece of work with furnishings in autumn leaf and includes a restaurant and café bar. The cinema and sound apparatus is of the very latest type with facilities for the reproduction of gramophone records designed by Messrs Morley and Duke. The fresh air supply can be warmed or cooled while the main heating by water-fed radiators is instantly adjustable to meet the vagaries of the English climate 36 02 04 & a [1.1]

1936 02 05

The world premier presentation of the new GPO film unit production 'Night Mail' was given as the second gala performance in connection with the opening of Cambridge's delightful new Arts Theatre. It deals with the work of the Royal Mail night train from London to Scotland with plenty of novel-angle shots and some quick-fire doggerel which is made to synchronise with the train beats. Other features were a highly-diverting slapstick Mickey Mouse cartoon and the British Movietone News 36 02 05a

1936 02 06

The Cambridge University Mummers, who are still the only University Dramatic Society to admit women members equally with men in all their activities, are presenting 'Heartbreak House' by Bernard Shaw. In the cast there are four members of Newnham, the most prominent of whom is Miss Teresa Mayor. She will be supported by Beryl Eeman, Cecilia Hopkinson and Deirdre Moore. The play will be produced by George Rylands who is well known for productions at the A.D.C. 36 02 06a

1936 11 28

Billy Cotton, who is bringing his popular band to the Theatre Cinema, St Andrew's Street, has a style of his own. He stands coolly in the centre of the stage and with little more than a flick of the wrist gets just what he wants from the musicians. The band is a variety show in itself, best-liked on the stage because the wireless and gramophone cannot do them full justice. The comedians are especially good, there are two Japanese entertainers, a conjuror, dancers and a pair of trick cyclists. But Cotton is also

a keen racing motorist and has just bought Sir Malcolm Campbell's original 'Bluebird' which he intends racing at Southport. 36 11 28a & 36 12 01

1937 01 06

Cambridge Festival Theatre has started a million farthing fund to ensure they have money available in case of emergency. The weekly receipts have to cover weekly expenses. When a bad week comes the manager hopes things will pick up next week. During the summer people had come to the theatre but recently there had been a falling-off. The workers' voucher system had increased attendance but the vouchers were finding their way into the hands of people who were not entitled to make use of them. They entitled people to purchase two seats for the price of one 37 01 06

1937 07 17

The fate of the open-air theatre on Christ's Pieces is in the balance. Michael Walsh has been most unlucky; three of the four performances have been spoiled by rain. Thursday's show was particularly unfortunate as the programme, with the Town Band and St George on his charger, was essentially an outdoor show. His decision to transfer it to the Corn Exchange was taken to spare the 80 young performers disappointment. He says the drops of rain that fell from the roof to members of the audience are nothing compared to the tears that would have fallen on his head had he decided to cancel the production – 37 07 17b [3.16]

1937 09 04

Cambridge Repertory Players moving from Festival Theatre to Cosmopolitan Cinema which will be renamed the Little Theatre – 37 09 04

1937 10 02

'The Harassed Harrises', a play by local author Gerald Light, features a father who keeps a fried fish shop in a town that is obviously Cambridge. His son, a young man of brains, has won a scholarship to the university but feels he is looked down on because of his father's job. What makes things even more awkward is that his aunt is a bedder at his college who is very fond of whisky. Without a doubt the play was greatly appreciated by the audience at the performance given by the CUP Amateur Dramatic Society 37 10 02

1937 10 15

The Festival Theatre in Newmarket Road reopened under entirely new management of J.B. Somerville. The building has been redecorated and improved and will begin with what it is hoped will be a successful regime of plays, ballet and opera. Meanwhile the glamorous Marlene Dietrich's Technicolor film 'The Garden of Allah' is the principal attraction at the Regal Cinema while the Kinema presents 'The Princess comes across' starring Carole Lombard and Fred MacMurray 37 10 15 [3.18]

1937 10 20

Festival Theatre refurbished with electric candelabra from Alhambra in London – 37 10 20f

1938 01 08

After a successful fortnight of the pantomime 'Cinderella', the Theatre Cinema is closing down without any indication as to what its future may be. It was 42 years ago that the New Theatre was opened and has had a great history. Many of our leading actors have appeared and all tastes catered for – comedy, drama, musicals and grand opera. It was the coming of films that changed the Theatre's fortunes and after a hopeless struggle it was converted into a cinema with an occasional week of variety. 38 01 08a [3.19]

1938 05 31

Memories of stage and screen – 38 05 31w

1938 10 19

Festival Theatre to reopen under direction Neville Towne with his own Repertory Company – 38 10 19

1938 11 22

The Theatre Cinema reopened after a closure of over nine months with a performance of 'The Mikado' by Cambridge Amateur Operatic Society. They had found the building in a poor and dirty condition and put in much work to recondition it. Now it was crowded with a delighted throng; it was itself again. That pre-overture buzz of conversation created a delightful feeling of mild excitement. At the final curtain everyone was thoroughly happy 38 11 22

1939 02 04

St George's Players first performance – 39 02 04

1939 03 17

Plans to make the Festival Theatre a twice-nightly music-hall were knocked on the head by the war scare last September, a bankruptcy hearing was told. A lady trading as 'Diana Tempest', who was previously a clairvoyant under the name of Alexia, became actress manager at the Festival and the Theatre Royal Aldershot. But the venture was not successful: she did not take more than £50 a week and the expenses were £90. She was now earning £2 a week in Cambridge by her clairvoyancy. 39 03 17a

1939 06 17

Theatre Cinema, St Andrew's Street, known for many years as the New Theatre, was closed in January of last year after the pantomime but specially reopened for one week in November for the annual production by Cambridge Amateur Operatic Society of 'The Pirates of Penzance' Now the ABC company has decided to use the building once again as a cinema 39 06 17

1939 12 16

Raymond Bennett has made a name for himself on the professional stage and will soon be returning to his home town, Cambridge, as the principal comedian in the pantomime. He has recently spent some weeks entertaining troops and homes to go to France shortly with Wee Georgie Wood and Jasper Maskelyne. He has faced big audiences at the London Palladium, the Coliseum and the Alhambra but confesses to a slight nervousness about coming home. 39 12 16a photo 16b

1940

1940 01 12

Raymond Bennett, the Cambridge-born comedian, claims to have been the first to use the new popular chorus song "The Chestnut Tree". "Many years ago," he told me, "whilst I was here in Cambridge, I was going down to the Cam Sailing Club grounds at Clayhithe, and on the way I passed a school where the children were doing an action song. I watched them for a time, and it struck me that here was something that could be used as a good chorus song. And I memorised enough to enable me to sing it with success for a good many years 40 01 12 CIPof

1940 04 27

Play 'The Seven Deadly Virtues' by Hugh Ross Williamson takes place opposite Trinity – 40 04 27b

1941 03 18

Herbert Hall, secretary of New Theatre for 30 years, dies – 41 03 18

1941 06 09

Cambridge popular concert party 'Romas' present 71st performance of their Forces Show to air raid wardens of Castle Ward; includes Maurice and Betram Garner, Rita Thurbon, Phyllis Burling, Les Germany and Dorothy Green – 41 06 09

1941 07 19

Jack & Claude Hulbert visit with Hulbert Follies, Jack born Ely, both at Caius College, wrote Footlights production 'Cheer Oh, Cambridge!' – 41 07 19, 41 07 26a

1941 08 23

Max Pemberton 'Varsity Tales' articles in Windsor Magazine includes a tin theatre with troupe of comedians; shower of oranges, boots etc – 41 08 23 # c.76

1947

St John's Players established (unbroken run from 1949, 40th year 1987) [7.6]

1947 09 27

It was "L'Entente Cordiale" night when the redecorated New Theatre, Cambridge, after an almost ten-year closure, re-opened yesterday as a cinema for the showing of Continental films. The Cross of Lorraine hung side-by-side with the Union Jack outside the cinema in honour of the visit of Francoise Rosay, the famous French film star who performed the opening ceremony. The Mayor (Coun. Doggett) wished the venture every success and expressed the hope that successful films may be followed by stage plays. "We have one theatre in this town but in my opinion there is plenty of room for a second theatre, particularly one with a larger stage". Capt A.C. Taylor, Managing Director of the "Cambridge Daily News" echoed the hope that some theatrical shows would be staged 47 09 27 [2.9]

1948 03 26

Some years before the recent war, Cambridge's New Theatre, having been a "live" house for over 40 years, not only ceased to be "new" in years but suffered a "sea change" into something neither rich nor rare - a theatre turned cinema - and saddled too with the hybrid title "Theatre Cinema". This was the beginning of a period that might be described as a winter solstice, for the building eventually closed, and during the war it was in the hands of the military. But now, after another brief life as a cinema, it has at last reverted to the type of entertainment for which it was built, and the merry band of players which yesterday presented the first professional "live" show to be seen in the theatre for many years are the successors of a long line of theatre folk, who during the palmy years passed across the New Theatre's stage in glorious array. The large audience who crowded into the building for the reopening found that the theatre with its re-decoration, modern lighting and stage equipment, including the inevitable "mike", had been given a new look c48 03 26

1948 04 13

History was made at the New Theatre, Cambridge, last night when the International Ballet Company presented the most spacious classical ballet spectacle ever to be seen in Cambridge. And the result was an evening of sheet beauty. A company of over sixty presented a performance outstanding for its virility and attack, and there was a first class orchestra - their numbers made it necessary for them to "overflow" from the orchestra pit into adjoining boxes and the stalls. The work last night was the full-length version of "The Swan Lake". Leading the superb company is the prima ballerina Mona Inglesby 48 04 13

1949 05 18

The audience remained in their seats and the play continued when fire broke out in the men's cloakroom at the A.D.C. theatre during a performance by the Cambridge Training College for Women Drama Group. The blaze was caused by a smouldering pipe left in the pocket of one of the coats in the cloakroom. At the height of the blaze, the auditorium became hazy with smoke as it drifted in through the ventilators. The audience, composed largely of university members did not panic and cheers greeted an announcement that the fire was under control c49 05 18

1949 12 16

New Theatre gives backstage tours [2.14]

1950

1950 12 06

Cambridge University's puppet club, the Geppetto, formed in January this year, presented its first public production at the Round Church Hall. "Jack and the beanstalk" was written and produced by the club's founder and honorary director, Tony Hepworth, of Trinity College. The performance was extremely amusing – some of the fun was not altogether intentional 50 12 06

1951 03 13

A journey, in many ways reminiscent of those made during the war, was repeated by members of the Romas Concert Party. This time it was not through the black-out to some remote RAF site or searchlight emplacement, but to the Cutter Inn, Ely, where they celebrated their reunion dinner. Over 500 shows had been presented for the forces between 1940 and D-Day. They had overcome transport difficulties by commandeering a meat van with a pheasant on the side 51 03 13

1951 06 19

New Theatre changes from Music Hall & revue to season of West End plays [2.19]

1952 03 21

Claude Hulbert, the loveable comedian, heads the cast at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge in his brother, Jack's production of the famous farce, "Nothing but the Truth", which ran for 578 performances in London. The Hulberts have many associations with the area. Sons of an Ely doctor both came to Caius College and were enthusiastic members of the Footlights Dramatic Club. Jack appeared at the Arts in "The Hulbert Follies" with his famous wife, Cicely Courtneidge, in July 1941, while Claude had a notable success in "Worth a Million" when he co-starred with Edmund Gwen and Ruby Miller. CDN 52 03 21

1952 08 30

Considerable reductions in the price of admission are to be made when the New Theatre opens next week which represent the absolute minimum that can be charged. When really outstanding radio artistes, whose salaries are sometimes fabulous, are booked it may be necessary to revert to the old prices. Most of the alterations have been structural – dry rot had attacked some of the timbers – but an enormous amount has been done to ensure complete comfort with sprung seating and a new microphone installation giving the best sound reproduction obtainable. 52 08 30

1953 10 21

Cambridge Daily News feature on Arts Theatre's "17 years of successful endeavour" [3.8]

1952 10 25

Arts Theatre ask City Council to help meet their losses but withdraw request "since Council has no pride of ownership of theatre or gratitude over what achieved over last 16 years" [3.3, 3.5]

1953 03 24

With Old Mother Riley there is no compromise – either you like her immensely or you dislike her intensely. And judging by the queues at the New Theatre the 'likes' heavily outnumber the 'dislikes' in Cambridge. In 'Going Gay' she takes the lion's share of the programme in several amusing sketches. The humour is of the simple, homely kind in which Arthur Lucan excels. A lot of people will be looking for the boisterous fun and frolic which has become identified with the name of Old Mother Riley and they will not be disappointed. 53 03 24

1953 08 01

A Pageant for Coronation year is to be performed in the grounds of St John's College in aid of the Cambridge Residential Home for Old People. In this enterprise Town and University combine. About 150 people take part from a distinguished historian to a little girl of six. It includes a genuine ancient broadsword lent by Prof G.M. Trevelyan, Master of Trinity and greatest of living historians. Amongst

those taking part are Michael Cogman, a nine-year-old pupil from Milton Road School, Charles Batts, Timothy Roach and David Bartlett. 53 08 01

1954 01 02

Death of A.B. Horne, better-known as Amner Hall; at Festival 1929-30 [3.8]

1954 03 25

Mr John Gambling of Milton Road Cambridge who has died at the age of 82 was the oldest active magician in the British Isles. A member of the Inner Magic Circle since its earliest days he first became interested in 1881 when he acted as assistant to 'Signor Bosco' and later performed on land, sea, in the air and down a coal mine. During the First World War entertained nearly every evening at the First Eastern General Hospital. After retirement from his post of Borough Road Surveyor he lived a life of adventure. He made many trips to Morocco and was the only white magician known to have performed in a harem. The Moors learned to recognise his pointed moustache and would gather round him clamouring for an on-the-spot show. 54 03 25

1954 09 28

The crowds who queued up for tickets outside Cambridge's New Theatre put paid to the story that Music Hall is dying. There was slap-stick comedy, Eddie Arnold with his variety of voices, Brian Andro on the high-wire, a strong-man acrobat, Rusty – a dog of mathematical powers, Bobby Collins – a first-rate whistler and the Lee Youngsters, a trio of singers. The star attraction was Tony Brent, a crooner of promise, but surely there will come a time when we shall have heard his songs just once too often. Forthcoming attractions include Don Saunder's Circus and Don Lammaree and his Lone Star Road Show, Phyllis Dixey and Cinderella on Ice. If the Cambridge public give it support then even bigger names will be attracted from London. CDN 28.9.1954

1954 11 16

It is said that nude shows are killing the variety theatre. Well now the Cambridge New Theatre gives you a chance to form your own opinion. The leading lady is none other than 'Jane', the famous strip cartoon character; we catch glimpses of her flitting behind illuminated screens or lying on discreetly lighted couches. There are also a variety of young ladies performing weird and wonderful gyrations in varying stages of dress and undress – all for the sake of art and culture no doubt. In my opinion nude shows are becoming too frequent and the novelty is beginning to wear off somewhat. CDN 16.11.1954

1954 09 11

George Rylands to produce Troilus & Cressida for BBC tv [3.12]

1955 01 29

ADC celebrate centenary [3.13]

1955 03 20

Cambridge's New Theatre has introduced stereophonic sound for a production of 'Las Vegas'. There is nothing really revolutionary about the system which consists of a series of loudspeakers hung in various parts of the auditorium through which the voices of American singing stars are relayed as a background to the action on the stage. But it does show enterprise on the part of the producers and enterprise of any kind should be encouraged. 55 03 20

1955 05 11

The Arts Theatre unveiled an extension to its Roof Garden restaurant, decorated in gay modern style and complete with the latest Espresso Coffee equipment. Some regretted the reduction of the outdoor terrace space but with the fickle English climate the new area would prove an agreeable amenity both for meals and during theatre intervals. Losses in the theatre could only be made up by profits from the Cinema, scenery studio and catering activities. Once the novelty of television had worn off an

increasing number of people would again seek the solid satisfaction of liver performances. 55 05 11 [3.14]

1956 02 21

New Theatre installs new electronic organ [3.21, 3.22]

1956 03 17

New Theatre closes; opened 20 January 1896; those appearing included Sybil Thorndyke, Jack Hulbert, Norman Hartnell [3.22]

1956 03 17

New Theatre closes in Jubilee year – review performers 56 03 17

1956 05 15

Danny Kaye, the world-famous comedian visited Cambridge Guildhall and in the 50 minutes he occupied the stage he promised to ‘liberate’ the wives of University Dons and sang popular songs such as ‘Ugly Duckling’. But his visit had a more serious purpose. He is on a world tour with a camera team making a film about the children of the world for U.N.I.C.E.F. His arrival and departure caused a minor riot. Crowds besieged his car, seeking autographs 56 05 15a & b & c

1956 11 19

Playhouse closes due to Entertainment Tax: used to have one single-turn music-hall artiste each week with pictures, had small orchestra [3.23,7.3]

1956 12 10

Hundreds of people daily pass the unobtrusive grey brick Festival Theatre building in Newmarket Road, but few are aware that some of the foremost names in British acting began to learn their art there. Now used as a wardrobe and for scene painting by the Arts Theatre, the footlights have been dimmed and the seats are empty. But the stage and auditorium are in good condition and one day the curtain may rise again. [detailed feature 56 12 10 & a]

1956 12 22

Raymond Bennett, the talented comedian and theatre manager laments the closing down of the Playhouse in Mill Road. It was there he made his debut as a single-turn music hall artiste. In those days it had a small orchestra and had one turn each week with the pictures. They included Godwin Hunt, baritone and humorous vocalist, George Gass, comedian of ‘The Magpies’ concert party and Sydney Pratt the conjurer. 56 12 22a & b

1957 02 02

Arts Theatre 21st anniversary; brief history

1957 06 08

Hugh Woodhouse of St John’s, playwright – 57 06 08b

1957 10 12

A.D.C. improvements to auditorium [4.8]

1957 10 23

Derek Jacobi, a St John’s College Freshman, will take a part in a new production at the ADC. He played ‘Hamlet’ at the Edinburgh Festival this summer and is to have a film test with 20th Century Fox. It is possible, to judge from the identity of one member of the audience in this his first play of his student days, that the West End may be interested in him too. 57 10 23a

1959 12 14

Jack Hulbert, the famous actor, took his M.A. degree watched by his wife, the actress Miss Cicely Courtneidge. Jack became a B.A. of Caius college before the First World War and so has long been eligible for this higher degree. As an undergraduate he wrote and took part in a large number of entertainments and starred in the Footlights revue. His first big success was in 'Cheer Oh! Cambridge' at the Queen's Theatre London in 1913. Local people wish success to one of the most warm-hearted couples in show business. 59 12 14

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 01 29

New Theatre history feature – 60 01 29

1961 04 25

'Beyond the Fringe' hit the Arts Theatre audience with the force of a thunderbolt. The four young men performed throughout in lounge suits against an unchanging background. There was Jonathan Miller, elastic in voice, features and limbs, Peter Cook with his more serious type of humour and semi-apologetic expression and Alan Bennett who looks like a cross between an aged professor and an endearing but mischievous schoolboy. The music was in the hands of pianist Dudley Moore, whose prize piece was a variation of 'Colonel Bogey'. It was certainly a revue in the highest calibre of entertainment 61 04 25

1960 06 11

Arts Theatre appeal for £75,000 memory Keynes [7.12]

1961 07 21

Cambridge Pageant, Castle Hill – 61 07 21

1961 08 07

Frank Cross of Brampton Road Cambridge gave his first 'Punch and Judy' show when he was ten years old and has given countless performances all over the country. He is continuing a tradition of three generations of puppetry which started when his grandfather, a Wesleyan preacher in Lancashire, used to entertain the children at Sunday school parties. Frank uses the same script as his grandfather and a paper mache cast of a 300-year old oak Punch. He has taught his son and daughter to work the puppets and now his four-year-old grandson is under instruction. 61 08 07

1962 08 17

New Theatre demolished [4.10]

1963 05 31

Footlights Review includes Tim Brook-Taylor, John Cleese & Bill Oddie [4.11]

1964 10 09

Historic & famous 'Little Theatre' at rear of 'New Spring' Chesterton Road to be demolished [7.1]

1965 01 17

Prospect Theatre has a good first year as Cambridge-based Company: effectively started life as Britain's leading touring group with HQ at Festival Theatre [7.2, 8.10]

1965 06 03

Proposal for arts centre, Lion Yard to include new theatre for amateurs but drama factions unsure if this wanted & role of A.D.C. which available for town groups 28 weeks of year; goes into black firm time since 1855 [6.2, 8, 6.8]

1969 03 19

ADC Theatre given permission to show films all year round , stands empty for much of year – 69 03 19d

1969 07 28

Norman Higgins, impresario, was manager Tivoli in 1928, involved Arts Cinema & Theatre, served on board – profile- 69 07 28

1969 07 30

Cambridge Theatre Company established to succeed Prospect Productions at Arts Theatre & undertake touring in medium-sized theatres, encourages many writers, actors & directors to come to Cambridge by its existence & record, first production 1970: will work closely with Prospect to give Cambridge wide & balance programme of drama, 7-10 plays at Arts followed by short tour while Prospect continues devoted entirely to touring (though will visit Cambridge) [8.8]7]

1970

1971

Technical College new auditorium, theatre completed last autumn [17.4]

1972 07 14

Arts The Cambridge Arts Theatre has suffered "staggering" financial losses this year - often £1,000 a week – and the Secretary and General Manager, Mr Andrew Blackwood, said yesterday: "We can't go on like that. We would soon be out of business". The reason for high production costs was that touring companies require guarantees of £1,500 or more before they would visit Cambridge. Seat prices generally ranged from 40p-90p and 50p-£1. Audience attendance figures were 14,000 down on the year - and he blamed Cambridge's impossible car parking situation for the loss 72 07 14 [7.13]

1972 10 06

Cyril Fletcher last performance as Dame [7.14]

1973 02 07

A.D.C. cash shortage threatens shut-down [7.5]

1974 05 22

Arch-goon Spike Milligan hosted a reception at the University Arms Hotel with folksinger Jeremy Taylor to mark the release of a double album, "An adult entertainment: Spike Milligan live at Cambridge University", recorded in concert at the Lady Mitchell Hall last year before an invited audience. Spike made a military entrance dressed in a blue-denim jacket – buttoned up wrongly – and a flowery shirt and inspected the guests who lined up in military ranks. He had spent the day in Cambridge being filmed by a BBC crew. In the afternoon he visited the market and briefly served behind the counter of Mr Andy Gray's record stall 74 05 22

1974 06 10

Norman Higgins, a trustee and former managing director of the Cambridge Arts Theatre died at his home. Eight years ago he retired as general manager of the Arts cinema which he had started as the Cosmopolitan cinema in 1933. His contribution to the cultural life of Cambridge since he managed the old Tivoli cinema was immense. He willingly responded when Lord Keynes invited him to supervise the building of the new Arts Theatre and was subsequently responsible for more than 200 productions of opera, ballet, plays, revues and pantomimes 74 06 10

1975 08 14

Cambridge colleges are to be approached by the Arts Theatre trust in its bid for survival after running into the red to the tune of £18,000, its biggest ever loss. St John's College has granted a subsidy of £3,000 a year after hearing of the theatre's plight. The financial situation could deteriorate further due

to the loss of a £2,500 grant from South Cambs. District Council and the failure to gain support from East Cambs. District Council 75 08 14

1977 04 15

Prospect becomes resident company at Old Vic, no longer visits Cambridge [8.10]

1977 07 22

Jesus Green open-air theatre planned, scrapped [7.7]

1978 02 27

Cambridge University Footlights Amateur Dramatic Club celebrated the opening of a new cellar clubroom at the Cambridge Union Society. Only a couple of crates of fish were lacking to evoke something of the atmosphere of the late lamented club room, situated above a fishmonger's in Falcon Yard. Clive James topped the bill at an inaugural cabaret. A chunky, rapidly middle-ageing figure with fast-receding, Sinatra-like hairstyle, his sharp vinegary wit seemed to be the essence of monologue. Clive Anderson demonstrated that there might be a place in show business for a genuinely sophisticated stand-up comedian. 78 02 27

1978 08 03

Arts Theatre £70,000 loss 1977-78, may need to close for time unless get Local Authority money [8.1]

1978 09 01

Marquee ballet may close Arts Theatre [8.2]

1980

1980 10

Supertent used for pop, Canon & Ball [38.11.2]

1982 06 21

Footlights centenary, has base for first time in six years, since 1971, now cellar Union Society [7.11]

1982 07 16

An Aladdin's cave of curious dusty lots comes under the hammer as former stage props are auctioned off at the old Festival Theatre in Newmarket Road, Cambridge. There's a glorious throne, the prow of a sailing ship and a pair of giant Corinthian columns, most of which have appeared at the Arts Theatre, which owns the building. It is said the Festival has a ghost – an old woman who was brought in to die after being run down by a horse and cart which bolted when delivering scenery. Dame Flora Robson wrote of meeting her. 82 07 16

1982 11 23

£1M appeal recital at Barbican by artists who started careers in Cambridge as tribute George Rylands who just retired as Chairman Arts Theatre Trust aged 80 [8.3]

1984 12 29

The Festival Theatre in Newmarket Road, which dates back to 1808, is one of the oldest in the country. It still has many original fittings including what is probably the oldest revolving stage in the country. In 1878 it became an evangelistic mission with religious texts painted on the stalls. Some still survive and may be part of a new permanent display which will feature other memorabilia including a scrapbook of cuttings when it was rebuilt by Terence Gray in 1926. During WWII the building was used for storage by the RAF and is currently the Arts Theatre wardrobe and scenery workshop. 84 12 29 [8.7]

1985 05 10

Cygnus Studios, the Cambridge theatre workshop, is closing and the magic props and gadgets painstakingly made by Philip Bond for productions throughout the country and abroad are to be auctioned off. It will mark the end of another chapter in the mixed fortunes of the Festival Theatre on Newmarket Road which closed its doors to productions in 1938 and was bought by Cambridge's Arts Theatre. Now an axe and block, complete with severed head, a stuffed stoat and a thunder sheet to rival the Gods will go under the auctioneer's hammer 85 05 10a

1985 05 21

Visitors to Cambridge Festival Theatre's workshop were treated to a dazzling display of pyrotechnics and wizardry when the props and gadgets of Cygnus Studios went under the hammer. A vast severed head – complete with axe and block – swung like a macabre pendulum above the customers. An electric chair burst into life sending a thrill through the audience and Philip Bond, the head of the studios, made sure that the theatre's ghost had a star turn. Then as the auctioneer brought his hammer down for the last time it exploded into a thousand tiny fragments marking the end of another chapter in the Theatre's 250-year history 85 05 21b

1985 11 22

ADC history – 85 11 22a

1986 02 03

Actors, actresses and directors arrived in Cambridge to mark the 50th anniversary of the Arts Theatre. Eleanor Bron, whose career started with the Cambridge Footlights, arrived first to be followed by Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Timothy West with his actress wife Prunella Scales and Judi Dench. Sir Peter Hall laughed with his old friend Trevor Nunn and was joined by Ian McKellan, the irrepressible Arthur Marshall and the broadcaster Richard Baker. The occasion was a unique recital devised by Dr George Rylands, affectionately known as 'Dadie' 86 01 03 86 02 03b & c

1986 01 27

Elite of British acting world give unique Shakespeare performance - "Strange eventful history" celebrate 50th anniversary Arts Theatre, £15,000 raised [8.4]

1986 06 12

Prince Edward battles to save Cambridge Youth Theatre – 86 06 12a

1986 08 22

Arts Theatre loses £181,000 at box office [8.5]

1986 09 16

Cambridge Theatre Company celebrate century of productions [8.9]

1987

ADC get £60,000 refit [NS2.1]

1988 07 11

Marlowe Society revived; stopped about 12 years ago; tradition that used local actors for its 2nd annual production ¢CEN 11.7.88

1988 09 23

Cambridge Touring Theatre formed ¢CEN 23.9.88

1988 12 02

Andrew Blackwood retires as Secretary & General manager of Arts Theatre after more than 30 years ¢CEN 2.12.89

1989 05 18

Cambridge Theatre Productions will now open all its performances in its home town and hope to get all Cambridge entertainments bookable at a central ticket office. The new visiting director, Robin Midgley, is keen to make it truly local instead of being just a touring company which happens to have offices in the city. He would also like to see a closer relationship with the Arts Theatre and do a children's show making use of young people from Cambridge. 89 05 18

1989 09 21

Cambridge Arts Theatre is to launch an appeal to replace its 650 aging and tatty seats, worn carpets and poor ventilation system. Despite artistic success it has financial problems. Even when a show is a roaring success and playing to packed houses, the theatre makes a £3,000 loss. The problem is worse when operas are performed as a full orchestra reduces seating capacity from 650 to 580. Small profits from catering services, costume-hire and renting out the building for conferences only makes a dent in the overall loss. 89 09 21

1989 11 24

ADC installs new behind-the-scenes technology for opening curtains – 89 11 24b

1989 12 02

Andrew Blackwood, who has been on call at the Arts Theatre for more than 30 years, has handed over the reins to a new secretary and general manager. His predecessor, Norman Higgins became first secretary in 1939 89 12 02a

1990 05 02

Andrew Blackwood retires as manager of Arts Theatre, Stephen Walton his successor; interview – 90 05 02a, b